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THE CONVERSION OF CHILDREN, AN IMPORTANT OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN EFFORT.*

The point in life at which children enter upon responsibility and become personally guilty before God is undefined in the Bible. Revelation sheds no definite light upon this question. It is reserved to the Divine Being himself, and we leave the question with profound deference to his holy and merciful discrimination,—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right." We accept with devout gratitude what He has revealed. Enough is intimated to impart consolation to the bereaved in death, and so little as to awaken parental anxiety in life for the salvation of the child. The manifestation of evil is early apparent. "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." The sinfulness of human nature is traceable to our first parents,—"By one man sin entered into the world." The results of the first transgression have fallen upon the whole race,—"By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." It has not affected the mere accidents of man's being, but has touched his nature and altered his condition. The fountain-head is polluted, and the streams are impure. Personal transgression has endorsed the original deed, and the verdict of God is universal,—"All have sinned." The truth of the charge is admitted. The painful experience of all testifies "We have sinned." Interpretations of man's native state as a sinner, are various and contradictory; but whatever explanation be accepted, one thing is evident, that on the ground of man's fallen state is founded the necessity for a thorough change of *heart* as a means of recovery and restoration to God. It is an inward change that underlies all true reformation. It is not brought about by self-culture or religious training, it is the "renewing of the Holy Ghost," "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." The change noted by the words "a new creature," is in the Bible described by different phrases, or defined by different terms according as the work is viewed in its several aspects. The change, having respect to sin as spiritual death, is *a new birth*,—"begotten again;" and having reference to sin as a departure from God, *it is conversion*—a turning "from the power of Satan unto God." We overlook the distinction between regeneration, as the infusion of grace into the heart, in which man is passive; and conversion, the

* The above paper was read by the Rev. P. Prout, of Haslingden, at a meeting of the East Lancashire Union of Baptist Churches held at Goodshaw, August 5th.

consequent exercise of that grace, in which man becomes active. In personal religion there is the concurrence of the human act with Divine agency, and the attempt to draw the line of separation between the agency of God in the soul, and its own individual action, would be as vain a speculation as to mark the line that separates light from darkness in the natural.

The work of conversion is associated with human instrumentality,—"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee." It is ascribed to the word of God,—"The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul." It is pressed upon the sinner as a duty,—"Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." But while human instrumentality is employed, and the work is urged upon the sinner as a duty, it is accomplished in a way so as to keep prominent before the mind this truth, as though written in letters of gold upon our earthen vessels,—"That the excellency of the power is of God and not of us."—"For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The conversion of a sinner therefore, in any period of life, from childhood to old age, is ultimately in our calculation, a question of *Divine power and fitness*.

The early period of life is the most suitable to impress upon the mind religious truths. It is opening to outer influence, with a peculiar aptitude to receive instructions, and with a heart susceptible of the most tender touch. The impressions of childhood are the most permanent, and in their results the most important. They give character to manhood, and whether true or false, pure or impure, they abide and come up in after days in all the power of youth. The future of life, as it depends much upon what the child is, so it is of vast moment that the right direction be given to the thought and action. The capability of children to receive the Divine blessing is recognised in the fact that Christ "Blessed them." Their aptitude to apprehend truth is assumed by the fact that they supply the lesson to teach the adult how he ought to receive the kingdom of God. The point of our Saviour's illustration is not exclusively in the humility of the child, but also in an intelligent appreciation of Divine truth, however faint it may be. The Word of God is interesting to a child. The histories and biographies, parables and miracles, precepts and doctrines, have charms for the family circle. The right use of the Bible at home, as a book of instruction for the child would in a great measure anticipate the craving of human nature that runs in quest of fiction and romance; and the mind stored with the precious seed yielding a satisfaction, would be as a guardian angel to keep out the trivial and impure. The Rev. Henry Venn says, "The great danger is from surfeiting children with religious doctrines or over much talk—I did not give mine *formal* instruction till they were eight years old; and chiefly set before them the striking facts in the Old Testament, or the miracles in the New. I also laboured much to set before them the goodness of our God in things which they could understand," &c. His family has had the blessing promised to the seed of the righteous; and his sons and grandsons have continued the evangelical succession of devoted ministers of Christ.

The Word of God is expressly designed to answer the urgent enquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" The counsel given is as suitable to the child as to the adult. One answer is for all, and the child in its simplicity apprehends it as correctly as the scholar in his meditative mood. "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." We should aim, as a means to attain our important object, to lead the child direct to the cross of Christ. As a scene of suffering it appeals to human sympathy, and as the manifestation of God's love is calculated to awaken love for him, who first loved us and gave himself for us. There is a mystic power in the cross; it is the wisdom and the power of God; and as we linger before it, and speak of redeeming love, we shall have reason devoutly to acknowledge, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."

The period of childhood or youth is the most critical moment of life. The convictions of right and wrong early manifest themselves, and the conflict begins in personal experience which shall be ascendant. The interests of the soul and the results of eternity are usually decided by the term of manhood. The battle of spiritual life or death is first fought within the recesses of the soul in the struggles of conscience and youthful passions; the half-yielding heart at first, indicates the tendency of nature, and when it has surrendered the right and taken action in a wrong direction, too often the doom is for ever sealed. If the testimony of all Christians could be collected who have been favoured with religious privileges when young, they would, we are inclined to believe, testify to early convictions of Divine truth. And if they who have been similarly favoured, but who have lived to old age undecided, were to give evidence, they too would testify to the fact of early and powerful convictions of the world to come. We may call these natural emotions, and nicely discriminate between the natural convictions of conscience and the work of grace. We may speak of the temporary character of the former and the certainty of the latter. But the fact is still before us to be accounted for that, as a rule, in early life the choice is made for God, or never.

An earnest minister in New York, having investigated 253 cases of converted persons under his own care, gives the result with respect to the ages at which they were converted:—138 under the age of twenty, or more than one half of the whole; 85 between the age of twenty and thirty, one third of the number; 22 between the age of thirty and forty, or one in seven; 4 from forty to fifty years of age; 3 from fifty to sixty, and 1 only after the age of sixty. We do not present these figures as something out of the ordinary way, we presume that if the results of most ministers in similar circumstances were gathered, they would be kindred, and illustrate the same truth,—early conversion to God.

There is a time when youth is *poised upon the point of indecision*, whether to serve God or no. He hesitates to cast in his lot with God's people, and resolve their God shall be my God. There is the alternation between hope and fear, joy and grief, Christ and the world. In some cases the distress and anguish are beyond expression; and while in a state of hesitancy counter-influences act unfavourably. A state of indifference follows, and associates are chosen from the point of indecision,—he walks in the counsel of the ungodly, stands in the way of sinners, and thence sits in the seat of the scorner. In the transition from one state to another appeals have been made and entreaties pressed, which at first were partially regarded, but afterwards they were treated with carelessness, and then with dislike. In a somewhat hopeless state of mind we have turned away and have thought we have heard the voice of God,—"Let him alone for he is joined to idols." But another scene comes up the counterpart of this. A parent's heart is sad, Christian regrets are uttered, and a teacher's hopes are disappointed. In the Sabbath school the question is raised, how to retain our elder scholars? Means are suggested to make more interesting the instructions, and provision is made for other entertainments. Granted, that there is room for improvement, yet we might have learned by painful experience, if not from the teachings of the Bible, that in the absence of true conversion to God we cannot retain and interest the scholars in harmony with the spirit of religion. We heard the discussion of retaining elder scholars more than thirty years ago, and the result of these years of observation has matured the opinion of those days, that the source of failure was to be found chiefly in the defective religious training of the *earlier* period of life, and the want of piety on the part of the Church of Christ to guide the youth, over the crisis of being, to the city of refuge.

The *method of God's procedure* should for ever have settled the question of a child's conversion, and the example of Christ should have prompted to earnest effort. But it has been a strange work in the eyes of Christian people, and in the face of evident facts, distrust has applied the question—"How can these things be?" We have lacked faith in our work, and have not expected the blessing

for which we have professedly laboured. The object at which we have aimed has occupied some undefinable position, called religious education, and the conversion of the child has been a work postponed to some future day. The result has reflected the inner life of the labourer, and the child has breathed the prayer of Augustine—"O Lord convert my soul, but not now." We ought to be familiar with the records of early piety in the Bible. The representative names have been as Household Words in the Christian family. But we have looked at them with dimmed eyes, and have failed to discern the lessons taught by them. To us they have been comparatively useless as examples, and powerless as motives of action. The heart has ceased to warm at the recital of them, and faith has not strengthened by contact with them. And yet they clearly reveal the mind of God. We interpret the will of God by his action, as well as by the word spoken. The facts of the Bible favour the conversion of Children. The method of God in every age has been to call his servants in the dawn of life, or the vigour of youth. Abel was comparatively young when he fell a victim to envy, as he offered "a more excellent sacrifice." Joshua ministered to Moses when "a young man." Samuel was called of God, "being a child." From the family of Jesse, David was selected, "yet the youngest," and anointed with the spirit of the Lord. Jeremiah met his prophetic call in diffidence, "for I am a child." An honourable death is assigned to Abijah "because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." The period at which we find records of piety in the Bible owned by God with honourable mention, cannot be too early now to seek the salvation of others.

The family circle is the first and most important place in which the conversion of children should be sought. On the parent rests the responsibility of eternity, as well as of time. Public provisions cannot cancel the obligations of nature and revelation. The tendency of modern times has been to delegate individual duty to churches, schools, and communities: and work for God has been done with an imposing machinery and noise, which ought to have been done in the quietness of domestic life. Home piety has a character peculiar to itself. Divine truth as reflected upon the child from a father's image, and blended with a mother's love, will rear plants of righteousness not to be found in other fields of Christian labour. It is in home life that the first lesson of obedience is taught, and the principles of subordination established, which are bound together in the tenderness of affection. From the altar of the well ordered household the purest offerings will be daily presented to God, and bring down the richest blessings of heaven—"I will pour my spirit upon thy seed," saith the Lord, "and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. One shall say I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

The conversion of children *is included in God's purpose and embraced in the ministrations of his grace*, and when efforts are put forth they are crowned with his blessing. In the revival of 1859 and 1860 the work was conspicuous among children, in Wales specially so. The number of conversions in the Principality must have reached one hundred thousand, and while the ungodly, young and old, were reclaimed it is said "the large proportion of the converts are young persons," and chiefly, "those who have been trained early in the knowledge of the Bible by their parents, or in the Sunday school, or both." Their ages ran from twelve years to twenty-four. There were no remarkable means employed. The spirit distilled as the dew upon the tender herb in connection with quiet earnest prayer.

The labours of Payson Hammond among the children of London are calculated to impart an impulse to our efforts. Hundreds of children from seven years of age have said they believe in Jesus. Baptist Noel, speaking of their conversion, states, "They have wept first on account of their sins; they have

been joyful afterwards, and have said they love Jesus." And what are the attendant circumstances of so great a work? or what is the kind of agency put forth to bring about the result? It is simply this:—Earnest prayer.—Direct personal enquiry.—A present salvation for children.—Addresses on the Cross of Christ.—Aim at nothing but conversion.—Work heartily.—Expect God's blessing.—And "according to thy faith be it unto thee."

The conversion of persons *late in life is doubtful.* We will not take into our account the increasing difficulty arising from confirmed habits of sin. We will barely intimate the uncertainty of life and the probability that the procrastinator may be cut off without space for repentance. We will not forecast the physical and mental difficulties frequently attending the last moments that unfit the individual to listen to the gospel, and apprehend the truth in Christ. Yet among the painful incidents of ministerial life, not the least have been those wherein suffering has recalled a wasted life, and the soul struggling on the brink of eternity, convulsed with the horrors of remorse and the dread of a black future, and unable to receive the word of comfort. We do not say that late conversion is impossible. The grace of God is not limited to time, place, or circumstances, and at whatever period in life God performs the work, it is saving in its results. Cases turn up in which individuals have in old age become little children in Christ. But these are so rare that none should presume, and in circumstances that have plainly shown they were exceptional cases.

The *experience of Christian life* is against late conversion. Cases abound in which the servants of Christ have risked their own lives to save others; and after a devotion which true piety alone could inspire, an apparent change gave the reward of satisfaction; but the great majority of such with restored health have disappointed cherished hopes, "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Experience throws a doubt over the genuineness of death-bed repentance.

The question of late conversion is not one of possibility or impossibility in itself. It is the work of God and nothing is impossible with God in the restoration of man. But there are states or conditions in which it is not befitting for the Almighty to act,—"And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."—"Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." "Even so, Father: for *so it* seemed good in thy sight." The abuse of privileges and continuance in sin are visited by God with judicial blindness in this world, and the day of grace may end before the term of human life expires. "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."—"If our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost."

There are considerations which lessen the worth of a late conversion though its *reality be conceded.* The nearness to ruin, to which the individual has gone, may give at the moment intensity to the emotion of gratitude; but the remembrance of past sin and folly will damp the ardour, and cast around the brightest hopes the black shadow of early transgressions. Repentance for past sins owns the fact that they were, and a sense of pardoning mercy is associated with the sins forgiven; and the soul renewed with the Holy Ghost retains the consciousness of the past, and with a realising faith in a present salvation the cry is heard, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." The deeds of youth affect the character of manhood, and mingle in the experience of old age,—"His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the grave." Christian devotedness has recovered the lost one; but Christian tenderness could not wipe out the foul blots of a dissipated career. The father has welcomed the returned prodigal, and rejoiced in the forms of new life and beauty that appeared before him; but a life of previous sin was the dark ground upon which was seen the manifestations of spiritual life. The tear that dropped into the cup of joy spoke in silent but powerful language, of

dangers that had threatened eternal safety, and revealed the throbs of sorrow that had moved the heart before, as it had mourned in grief over the one "that was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

The lives of Manasseh and Josiah are not far divided in sacred history. They furnish a contrast, and supply an illustration. Manasseh was reared in the home of piety. Josiah not. Manasseh did evil in the sight of the Lord from his youth, and made others to sin. Josiah, "while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father," and at the age of twenty he began to reform the people and restore the worship of God. Manasseh, by the heavy judgments of God, was brought to repentance, and his latter days were employed to undo the wrongs of early life. Josiah maintained his integrity and religious consistency from the age of sixteen. Manasseh stands on the page of sacred writ as a monument of God's long suffering and mercy, and from his example the guilty is led to hope for pardon. Josiah's life is an example how to live; and as God demands the first fruits of life, as well as of increase, so the great lesson to teach the child is to present "a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

THE SAINTS' MOTTO.

"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."—Exodus xiv. 15.

THE above words were addressed to Moses by the Creator. Addressed to him under peculiar circumstances. He had been preserved and specially raised up to be the Leader of the Children of Israel. He was to lead them from bondage, in which they had long suffered, to liberty. He was invested with satisfactory credentials of the divinity of his mission. He went to the King of Egypt, under whom the Israelites suffered, and asked for their liberty; but the king refused to let them go. The transformation of the rod into a serpent failed to humble the pride, or to soften the stupidity of the king. When this failed, then came the ten fearful and destructive plagues. The last was the destruction of "the pride and the flower of Egypt"—the firstborn of the Egyptians. The heart of the king was frequently momentarily softened; but when the plagues were removed, it became hard again and again. When the first-born were destroyed, he even commanded Moses, Aaron, and all the Israelites to depart; that the land might be free from the plagues. They started off for the land of Canaan; but they had not gone far before they saw behind them the king and the hosts of Egypt, about, either to drive them back into bondage or to destroy them. They had encamped by the Red Sea, between the fortresses of the Egyptians. Escape appeared impossible. Before them was the sea—on each hand were the lofty fortresses—and behind them were the cavalry of Egypt. Either bondage or death appeared certain; some of them were struck with terror and despair. They spake against Moses. They charged him with bringing them forth to die. Moses replied:—"Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord answered, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the Children of Israel that they go forward." What! were they to go forward into the sea? Yes. It was their duty to obey. It was God's pleasure to provide. The above words are applicable to all Christians now, and will be down to the end of time. Going forward should be the motto of every Christian. "If any man draw back," says God, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him." The object of the writer of this article will be to say to every sincere, anxious soul, "Go forward."

1. This article may be read by some individual who has long groaned under the burden of sin, who is seeking for liberty, and who is even now, though with trembling, hesitating step, going to the cross of Christ. If so, let him "go forward." The Israelites had long sighed on account of the bondage of Egypt. Making bricks without straw, is intended to set forth the oppression under

which they groaned. They were caused "to serve with rigour." Now, however, they were making their escape. God was leading them forth from bondage to liberty; but just when liberty seemed at hand, when they were upon the boarders of the land, all hope seemed in a moment to vanish. Their way appeared to be hedged up. Even then the command was, "go forward." Even then, liberty was before them. When all hope appeared to be gone, when liberty seemed impossible, it was then most near. The opening and closing of the sea, settled the whole question for ever. "The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." The darkest part of the night, it is said, is just before the twilight of the morning. The darkest night may be followed by the brightest day. If a man be groaning on account of sin, his burden may be heavy, he may think himself the greatest sinner that ever breathed. He may be ready to sink into hell. He is sensible of his guilt and danger. He may have heard of Jesus, that he died to save sinners, and that "he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Even now, he may be on his way to Christ, though it be with faltering step. The idea may be in his mind—my sins are so great and so numerous, that I am afraid Christ will never receive me. I have sinned against light and knowledge. I have perpetrated sins of the most aggravated nature. They rise like mountains to the sky. I am afraid Christ will not receive me. All that such a man says about himself may be perfectly true. Sin is heinous and fearfully destructive, but all that he says, or fears about Christ is totally groundless. No sinner ever came to Christ, and was ultimately sent empty away. Sinners who have been most deeply dyed in sin, have proved the efficacy of his saving power and love. Saul of Tarsus who persecuted the church of God, Mary Magdalene out of whom were cast seven devils, and for the encouragement of any who may be at the close of life, the dying thief, have been among the number. Thousands who are now living, have come to Jesus, lost, helpless, and ready to perish. They have rested upon him, and have found pardon, peace, and everlasting life. Let the trembling sinner, then "go forward" to the cross, trust in Christ, and he will find salvation. "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out."

2. If a man has been raised to the enjoyment of liberty through Christ, he may be hesitating about going forward in the possession of Christ. A profession of Christ is an acknowledgement before the world of the possession of the divine nature, of a personal trust in Christ for salvation, and of a recognition of Christ as the King. This profession was made in apostolic times in Baptism. The disciples put on Christ. A man who enters the army as a soldier, is expected to put on the garb appointed for the regiment. If he should be called to go into districts and countries where there are enemies to his sovereign and to his country, he is expected there to wear it. He is to regard it as his honour to wear it. So, the disciple is to acknowledge Christ in all the circumstances of life. He is to regard it as his highest honour to be permitted to acknowledge Christ, even among his greatest enemies. "If I should make such a profession," this timid disciple says, "I should be a gazing stock to all around, I should be denounced as religious and enthusiastic. I might lose the approbation of my old friends, and I might have great loss in my business." All this may be true. But is it not far better that a man should lose all, than that he should lose his immortal soul. Multitudes have preferred to die at the stake rather than dishonour Christ. Behold what Christ has done for man. He left the world of light and purity, he assumed a body, he endured the reproach, the calumny, and the contempt of the world. He endured the crown of thorns, the agony of the garden and the death of the cross, to save lost man. Let the timid disciple then "go forward" in the bold maintenance of the profession of Christ.

"The worst that can come,
But shortens his journey,
And hastens him home."

3. A disciple is to go forward through a host of spiritual adversaries. Let not a disciple suppose, because he has spiritually professed Christ, that the battle is fought. It is a life battle. A young professor is in a similar position to a young recruit. The fighting is on before. A Christian needs the strength of Christ, and all the means of grace provided for him, to help him, and to sustain him in the fight. The world, the flesh, and the devil, constitute the three-fold enemy against which he has to contend. The greatest advantages, and the most flattering rewards are offered to all who will yield. Some there are who have never left Egypt—the world, and consequently have neither come to Christ, nor scripturally professed him. They are described by the name of Pliable. They cannot exercise the requisite self-denial. Instead of conquering, they are conquered. They fall back from the profession. Some of these wiseacres find out a new discovery. Religion is not what they expected it to be. It is all a delusion, all a sham. Instead of going along with the stream of the world, they find that religion demands they should fight against it. This they are not disposed to do, so, religion is not the thing for them. But the man who has groaned on account of the burden of sin, who has found liberty through the cross, cannot in heart go back into the world. He must fight on. The divine nature, the divine love, and a multitude of motives within him, prevent him from going back. He has had too much of the world already. God has provided no armour for the back. It is all for the front. Let the Christian soldier then fight on,—"go forward" in the strength of God, and victory over every foe is certain. None have ever been conquered who have fought under the banner of Christ, against the three-fold foe. With what confidence and zeal would an army of soldiers go forth to fight the enemy, if they had the assurance of certain victory, and without the loss of a single man? It is the advantage of the church of God—the army of Christ—to have the assurance of certain victory over every spiritual foe. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." Against every foe let the sword be used. It is written, it is written, it is written, and then will be certain and glorious victory.

4. The Israelites had to "go forward" through the desert. A desert is a wild, barren, uninhabited region. In such a place there are no sweet, beautiful, cultivated flowers, and fruits; no waving, golden corn, and sweet music. There may be the warbling of some wild songster, the hissing of some venomous serpent, or the bellowing of some wild buffalo. But little company, and but little comfort can be expected in such a place. So, to a Christian, this world is a wilderness. Men by nature in this world, are in a wild state. There are but few, comparatively, who yield the fruits of righteousness. It is not in every place where the song of praise to God can be heard. The song of the drunkard may be heard in the street. The bellowing of the wild man, and the hissing of snakish men may be heard; but the holy song of praise "Unto him that loved us," is rare. It does not fill the air. There are but few spiritual companions comparatively to be found. The soul of the Christian is often vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. "This is not your rest because it is polluted." Let the Christian then "go forward." Although he is in the wilderness, Canaan, with all its purity, its joy, and its bliss, is on before. "At God's right hand their are pleasures for evermore."

5. Let the saints "go forward" through trial. Once let an intelligent man know that the Israelites were a rebellious race, and he will not be surprised to find that they were severely tried. They were tried by hunger and thirst; tried by the biting of serpents, and tried by having to wander round a long circuitous path. The church of Christ at the present day could not boast of being very much superior to the Israelites. What worldly conformity, what extreme selfishness, what negligence of the meeting for prayer, and what a disregard for the honour of God appear. Is it any cause for wonder that saints should be tried now by great loss, persecution, or affliction? Is there not some truth in the lines?—

"His strokes are fewer than our crimes,
And lighter than our guilt."

But did the Israelites go back because they were tried? No, not one of them went back to Egypt. In seasons of difficulty, when death stared them in the face, for a moment they regretted that they had left Egypt. They even said that Moses had brought them into the wilderness to kill them. Still they went forward, so, the Christian's motto is still to be "go forward."

Again, let the Christian "go forward" through death. The Israelites marched through the desert. They marched through the river Jordan, into the promised land. Is it then that Jordan is the emblem of death? Then the Christian must go through death itself. Fear it not. The sting of death is sin; but sin is removed by the death of Christ from all Christians. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." God bestows proportionate grace for the dying hour. Multitudes of saints have given expression in their last moments, by word, or smile, or movement, to ecstatic joy. Death is the passage to the Canaan above. Hannah Moore said on her death-bed, "Oh, glorious grave! I know that my Redeemer liveth. It is a glorious thing to die." Let the saints then "go forward." To a Christian there is much advice in the tautology:—

"Go on, go on, go on, go on,
Go on, go on, go on, go on,
Go on, go on, go on, go on,
Go on, go on, go on, go on."

To a sinner the opposite is more appropriate:—

"Stop, poor Sinner, stop and think,
Before you further go."

Little Leigh. A. S.

JOTTINGS OF THOUGHTS ON THE "PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

Scene XV.

We have now a striking picture before us which Bunyan designates "Vanity Fair," and by which he symbolises the carnal pleasures, the sinful customs, and all the multiplied evils of large cities, and this wicked world. This fair has been in existence about five thousand years, and was established by Beelzebub and Apollyon, with other princes of the infernal regions. In this fair, as Bunyan truly tells us, all sorts of articles are sold, all sorts of games are carried on, and all sorts of crimes are perpetrated. Many of these things are sweet to the taste, though they are bitter to the stomach; they smile in one's face, though they are found to be as poison to the soul. But Vanity Fair, alas! is standing still. It was in the very zenith of its glory during the days of Bunyan, for Charles II. was altogether a man of carnal pleasure, and the court and the nation too much followed his pernicious example. We have, then, in Vanity Fair, all sorts of juggling, all sorts of robbery, all sorts of lies, and all sorts of murders. Here, also, we find the wares of continental countries, such as France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Rome. We have still offered for sale in this fair, such things as holy water, relics, indulgences, ave marias, and all the trinkets and baubles which the harlot of Babylon is wont to wear. And if we may judge from the "Tracts for the Times," and Dr. Pusey's "Irenicon," we should infer there are many purchasers at Oxford and Cambridge, and perhaps in London also. This great city only forms a portion of this fair, and yet it is a portion in which much business is done. Not only do damnable errors abound, and religious practices most destructive to the soul are carried on, but crime and immorality abound—the very counterpart of the antidiluvian age. In this one city (and it is a type of too many others), we have 12,000 children trained in crime; 3,000 persons are receivers of stolen property, speculators and dealers

in human depravity; 10,000 are addicted to gambling; 30,000 live by fraud and theft; 150,000 are habitual gin drinkers; and about the same number of both sexes have abandoned themselves to a life of systematic debauchery and profligacy. As one truly and eloquently remarks:—"where are the colours dark enough, and the imagination sufficiently daring, to portray the guilty reality? Here may be seen groups of demons in human shape, teaching crime professionally; initiating the young in the science of guilt, and encouraging their first steps towards destruction. Here pass before us trains of wretched females, leading thousands of guilty victims in chains; and leading them through a fearful array of all the spectres of disease, remorse, and misery, ready to dart on them. Here may be seen theatres with a numerous priesthood pandering to impurity, and offering up the youth of both sexes at the shrine of sensuality. Then there arise in all directions splendid porticos, the entrances to which must be inscribed hells; and on the foreheads of those who are entering—'going to be damned.' Within are busy hands distributing liquid fire to crowds of wan and squalid forms, whilst not far off, may be seen infidel Demagogues, mouthing the heavens, and gaping crowds admiring the skill which blindfolds men for destruction." Such is London; such are many of our large cities and populous districts; such is a portion of Vanity Fair—a concentration of depravity so virulent that it is enough to inoculate a continent with vice, and to corrupt the millions who people the world. How well for us, when passing through this fair, to imitate the example of Bunyan's Pilgrims, who, when asked to buy the ungodly wares, put their fingers in their ears, and looking upwards, cried aloud—"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."

SCENE XVI.

In this picture we have Christian and Faithful on their trial. A hubbub had been created by the strangeness of their garments and speech, whilst the indifference they had shown to the fair, had produced intense prejudice against them. Accordingly they were both brought into a court of Justice. The description which Bunyan gives of their trial, is derived largely from the treatment which he himself had received, and may be regarded as a keen satire, founded on scenes very common in this period of English history, sanctioned by all the formalities of law. The judge, Mr. Hategood, who conducts the trial, brings to mind Judge Jeffries of famous memory, whilst the two prisoners—Christian and Faithful, remind us of Baxter and Bates, who once stood in a similar situation. The author of the Saints' Everlasting Rest, attempted to speak when in court, but the inhuman judge replied: "Richard! Richard! dost thou think we will let thee poison the court? Richard! thou art an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, and every book as full of sedition, as an egg is full of meat. But by the grace of God I will look after thee." This was strong language, and yet mild compared with some he was wont to use. Baxter, however, shielded by his sacred office and unblemished reputation, fared better than some of his brethren. The fact is, Judge Jeffries was a fiend in human form, and never has the English bench been presided over by a viler man. Macaulay says—"His yell of fury sounded like the Judgment Day." He took a delight in misery, simply as misery. There was a fiendish exultation in the way in which he pronounced sentence on offenders. He loved to detail the punishment he awarded. Thus he would say to the executioner:—"Hangman, I charge you to pay particular attention to this lady. Scourge her soundly, man; scourge her till her blood runs down! It is Christmas, a cold time for madam to strip in; see that you warm her shoulders thoroughly." Such was the monster whom James II. took into his service, and made him arch-judge on the bench. Who can marvel that the Popish king should have been hated by his people, and that God should have chased him out of the land!

Scene XVII.

In this representation we have Faithful led away to the place of execution, where, after enduring all manner of suffering and indignity, he was consumed to ashes. In the treatment which this pilgrim received, we see nothing like the majesty of law, or the equity of justice. The good man condemned, is not placed in a vehicle, and in solemn silence taken to his doom, but is hurried along by brute force, as though death could not be effected too rapidly or too violently.

Bunyan in drawing this picture very probably had before his mind, the conduct of the Jews towards our adorable Redeemer, when they hurried him from the court of Pilate along "The Via Dolorosa," to the Hill of Calvary, crying out—"Crucify him—crucify him." Or, possibly, he may have been thinking of poor Stephen, who was hurried through the gate, which bears his name, and cruelly stoned to death on the slope of the hill which overlooks the Valley of Kidron.

It would seem that not only in the time of the Cæsars, but in the time of the Stuarts, the death of martyrs was often attended by circumstances of barbaric cruelty. We are told on good authority that King James, when the covenanters were in the hands of their executioners, would sometimes amuse himself by listening to their shrieks, and seeing them writhe, while their knees were being crushed and flattened by an instrument, known as "The Iron Boots." In this cruel and atheistic age there were so called men, who in their revels, were accustomed to play the torments of hell, and to call each other by the names of devils and damned souls. One of these earthly demons, being reproved by a good woman, whose husband had been shot, thus replied, (it is language which one shudders to read), "*I can answer for what I have done; and as for God, I will take him into my own hands!!*"

The doings at Vanity Fair remind us of yet more ancient times, and equally ferocious deeds, when, as the apostle says: "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented. They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these having all obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Hence though poor Faithful is treated with all manner of indignity, and afterwards consumed to ashes, he was far from being destroyed. Behind the crowd was a chariot, and a couple of horses provided by the King of Heaven himself, and in this aerial, royal car, was the disembodied spirit of the martyred saint conveyed to glory, amid the blaze of angelic forms, and the harmonies of angelic trumpets. Well, then, might Bunyan exclaim:

> "Sing, Faithful, sing; and let thy name survive,
> For though they kill'd thee, thou art yet alive."

Scene XVIII.

The physical death of one, is often the spiritual life of another. So it proved at Vanity Fair. Amongst those who witnessed the martyrdom of Faithful was one Hopeful, who was so won to the truth by the spirit of the confessor, that he resolved to join Christian in his pilgrimage to the Better Land. But after travelling some time together, and becoming discouraged by reason of the way, they were induced to turn out of the high road into a smoother and easier path, which conducted through a pleasant meadow, most inviting to the weary pilgrims. But pleasant as was this meadow at first, it became most distressing at last, for here they fell into the hands of one Giant Despair, and for several days were locked up in Doubting Castle.

Now there are many things in life which may prove a By-Path-Meadow to the Christian. Thus it is with marriage; it may offer an advantage to our circumstances, and give us a higher social status. But if a pious woman marry

a worldly man, just to better her condition in life, she will soon be in the hands of Despair, and a prisoner in Doubting Castle. Thus also with many situations in life, which a Christian may fill. They afford him a very good income, and enable him to keep a respectable house. But, alas! the conscience often becomes very elastic, the sanctity of the Sabbath is sadly invaded, and the claims of God's cause become subordinate, and altogether secondary to the higher claims of religion. These things wont bear reflection, and where at any time they are seriously pondered, they often bring dejection into the soul. Some have got into the hands of Despair through pride, self-righteousness, vain confidence and unbelief; and some again, by habits of self-indulgence, by dallying with temptation, and by falling into gross sins. David became a prisoner in Doubting Castle through incontinence; Asaph through an envious spirit; Hezekiah through pride; Jonah through disobedience; Job through wrong views of God's chastisement; and Peter through disowning his Master and Redeemer. How sad it is when saints get into this state; when they lose the evidence of God's love, and doubt the existence of his grace in the soul! What are worth the relations of life, if they make us doubt relationship to God as his children? What are all the opulent situations of life, if at last we feel, we are only muck-worms of the earth? What are all the pleasures of this world if they throw a shadow over our future prospects, and rob us of that pass-port, which alone will admit to the kingdom and presence of God?

The lesson of all this is the necessity of watchfulness, and fervent prayer, lest we go astray. It is well to take heed to our steps, and not be discouraged because the road in which we walk is rough, and our feet become tender and sore. We must take the way as we find it, whether rough or smooth; whether level or hilly; whether it follows the lovely landscape of the river, or leads along the rugged and dangerous precipice. As with the material, so with the spiritual—we must be prepared for changes and trials, and whatever God appoints, cheerfully endure. By-Path-Meadows may be very pleasant; as the green and soft sward is always preferred by the traveller to the stony and dusty road; but By-Path-Meadows, however tempting, are not safe; for they lead out of the King's Highway, and we may be assured whatever is a departure from the Word and will of God, will at last bring darkness over our souls, and doubts into our minds. Bunyan knew this well, as thousands have known it besides. Hence their cry:—"Bring my soul out of prison, and I will praise thee." And blessed be God, this prayer is heard, and at the set time deliverance comes. The "Key of Promise" is always possessed, and when remembered and believed is always used. Gate after gate is unlocked; door after door is opened; fear after fear is dispelled; liberty is restored; and the emancipated pilgrim finds himself on the road which leads to the city above. Thus as he walks along by the light of the morning sun, and invigorated by the morning air, he strikes up the song of grateful memories, singing to the music of heaven:—

"His gentle goodness leadeth me,
And makes me down to lie,
In greenest pastures fearlessly,
The quiet waters by.

"And so restoreth he my soul;
And when I wandering stray,
Weary and faint, He makes me whole,
And teaches his own way."

Crewkerne. *(To be continued.)* S. P.

A KIND WORD TO SWEARERS.

READER are you a Swearer? If you are, let me ask you kindly to read the following interesting narrative. I found it some years ago in the columns of an old Magazine, and have kept it to reprint at some favourable opportunity.

I now send it forth, praying that with God's blessing, it may cause you to give up such a vile, foul, and foolish habit. If you do not swear yourself—and I hope you do not—please read this to any who do, or get them to read it for themselves. In this way you may strike a blow at one of the most degrading vices of the age, and save the swearers soul.

Stanningley, Leeds. H. Watts.

THE YOUNG SWEARER RESCUED.

"Not long ago, Mr. G———, a Christian tradesman, was passing one of the busy factories that surround the town where he resides, just as the "hands" were rushing out for dinner. Although glad to witness their cheerfulness, he was distressed to hear a cluster of lads intermingling their noisy talk with fearful oaths. A young, thoughtful-looking operative, of about two-and-twenty, was walking by at the same moment, and Mr. G———said to him

"'How lamentable it is to hear such blasphemy as that from the mouths of lads like those. I dare say they all go to Sabbath-school; and how dreadful to think of a swearing Sunday scholar!'

"'Dreadful enough,' said the young man; 'and yet it reminds me of what I was myself a few years ago.'

"'Were you then once guilty of that shocking habit?'

"'Yes, for five or six years; in fact I began when I was about thirteen, and used to swear more or less every day, till I was mercifully led into a better way.'

"'How was it you began to swear at first?'

"'Well I didn't learn it at home; but some of the men where I went to work were terribly given to it, and some of the lads too. At first I rather shuddered to hear them; but, by degrees, I began to be fool enough to think it was a brave and manly thing; and, after a while, I could swear as wickedly as any of them.'

"'Do you remember how you felt the first time you uttered an oath?'

"'Yes; I shall never forget it. I was standing with some companions who were cursing a good deal, and I said to myself, "What a coward I am not to do as they do!" and so I ventured out an oath. I dare say my voice trembled; and, the moment after, I felt a sort of *cringe* all over me. But when I found that nothing worse happened, I got over it, and swore two or three times the same day.'

"'Did you think about it at night when you went to bed?'

"'Yes, indeed I did. When I kneeled down to say my prayers, I felt as I had never felt before. I knew I had been making mockery of God's name, and now I was pretending to ask Him to bless me. I did not seek his pardon, for I believe I was rather proud of what I had done; and so with a confused kind of feeling, I got into bed. I lay awake for above an hour, restless enough, but at last fell asleep. Day by day I grew more hardened in ungodly language: and when I found that kneeling at my bedside always made me uncomfortable, I gave up praying altogether.'

"'That was sad indeed. And did your teacher get to know?'

"'No; I don't think he did; for although there were two or three swearing lads in the class, we never let him hear us. But we gave him trouble enough in other ways.'

"'Well, did you stay long at school?'

"'Till I was about sixteen; and then I was glad enough to get away, and to feel myself my own master—*for the Sunday* at all events.'

"'But did you never go back again?'

"'O, yes, I did; or I don't know what might have become of me. After I had gone on very badly for three years, swearing often in my common talk, an old schoolfellow met me one day, and asked me to come back again to school. He said they had now a nice class of young men, in a separate room; that two or three old scholars had lately joined them, and they were all very

happy. That word "HAPPY" went to my heart; for I had not felt so for a long time, though I had never said so; but had tried to seem as careless and jovial as anybody. So I stood, considering, for a few minutes; but my old acquaintance begged so hard, that at length I promised to go with him on the following Sunday. And I praise God that I went; for I soon began to see and feel that there was peace and pardon in Jesus Christ, even FOR A POOR SWEARING LAD LIKE ME; and then I once more began to pray. It seems wonderful to me, when I think about it, that God should have had such mercy on me, when I had been using His name only to scoff at it so sinfully and so long.'

"The young man's eye moistened as he said this: and Mr. G———, who was also a good deal moved, replied with deep feeling—

"'O, yes, my young brother; and when you and I get to heaven, we shall be more astonished than ever at the mercy that has saved us. The latter part of your story has rejoiced my heart, and I thank you, a hundred times, for your frankness. But now—I see you are stopping here, and I must go further into the country—just tell me, before we part, how you get on *now* amongst your fellow workmen; and whether you think there is as much profane swearing as there was a few years ago?'

"'I fear,' rejoined the converted youth, 'that it is growing more common than ever, especially AMONGST YOUNGER BOYS. It makes me feel very sad sometimes. Of course, I do all I can, in a kind way, to help the poor young fellows out of the wicked habit, as I have been helped out myself; and I hope I have done some little good. But still, unless THE MEN THEMSELVES give it up, we can scarcely expect that THE LADS will. One of the most horrid things I ever heard at our place, is *a father and son swearing together!* It makes one's blood run cold. And then, another grievous thing is, that, where there is swearing, there is sure to be every other kind of foul and filthy talk. The lad that comes out with an oath, won't fear saying anything, no matter how bad and brutish.'

"Mr. G——— shook his young friend's hand very warmly at parting, exhorted him to *stand up for Jesus*, and to strive to bring many more of his pitiable companions to that same loving Saviour in whose precious blood he had himself found peace.

"For the rest of his half-hour's walk, our worthy friend G——— found his mind so completely taken up by the interesting confessions he had just heard, that he could scarcely help uttering aloud, as he went along, expressions like these:—

"'What a fearful thought—that hundreds of poor reckless youths should be daily calling down curses from heaven upon themselves and those around them! How they are hardening their hearts against Him who waits, with open arms, to welcome every returning prodigal amongst them, just as gladly as he has received this dear lad, and made him HAPPY.'"

Fragments and Choice Sayings.

SACRAMENTAL EFFICACY.

IT is impossible to express the pestilence and fatal nature of it, and especially as it has prevailed over a great part of the world, to the great detriment of the Church for many ages past. Indeed, it is DIABOLICAL; for, by promising justification without faith, it precipitates souls into destruction; in the next place, by representing the sacrament as the cause of justification, it envelopes the minds of men, naturally too much inclined to the earth, in gross superstition, leading them to rest in the exhibition of a corporeal object rather than in God himself.—*John Calvin.*

NOTICE.

"Prayer meeting and lecture as usual on Wednesday evening, in the lecture room. Dear brethren, I urge you all to attend these weekly meetings."

Some of the "dear brethren" reported themselves in this way:

Brother A. thought it looked like rain, and concluded that his family, including himself, of course, had better remain at home. On Thursday evening it was raining very hard, and brother A. hired a carriage and took his whole family to the Academy of Music, to hear a lecture on the "Intelligence of the Lobster."

Brother B. thought he was too tired to go, so he stayed at home and *worked* at the sled he had promised to make for Billy.

Sister C. thought the pavements were too slippery. It would be very dangerous for her to venture out. I saw her next morning going down street to get her old bonnet "done up." She had an old pair of stockings drawn over her shoes.

Sister D. thought there wouldn't be more than a dozen people at prayer meeting. She doesn't like these little meetings, so she didn't go. If she had gone there would have been thirteen. I met her next evening at a social gathering where there were just ten folks. She said she had spent a "delightful" evening.

Three-fourths of the members stayed at home. God was at the prayer meeting. The pastor was there. One-fourth of the members were there, and God blessed them. The persons who stayed at home were each represented by a vacant seat. God don't bless empty pews.—*The Christian Era.*

GEORGE MULLER.

George Muller, the renowned founder of the Orphan Establishment, Bristol, has received and expended 2,750,000 dollars, every penny of which was sent voluntarily, and without solicitation. He has twelve hundred orphan children under his charge, occupying five large stone houses, each distinct from the others. The following personal description is from the Boston *Journal* correspondence:

"He lives in the simplest style, and does not allow himself a lounge nor a rocking-chair, unless he is sick. He was a poor man when he began and is a poor man to-day, though he has handled millions of money, and could have spent it as he would. Muller is a Prussian, and was born in 1805. He was in the Prussian army. He was very wicked, and was converted by some signal display of grace; and he devoted himself from that hour to the cause of the poor. He is a tall, slim man, with the bearing of a soldier—with dark hair and grey whiskers—wears a black frock coat buttoned to the neck, and a white cravat without a collar. He speaks with a brogue. His preaching is very simple, earnest and full of Christ. He is a man of great executive ability, and is the sole manager of this immense concern. I have been all over his establishment. It would do credit to any government on the face of the earth. I have talked with the people of Bristol about Muller—merchants, tradesmen, draymen, storemen, all classes, religious and irreligious—and they all express the highest confidence in his piety, and integrity, and honour, and assign him a high place among model men of the world. His theory is this: That God is a hearer of prayer; that he is the same faithful God that He ever was; that this he believes and this he trusts, and has never been disappointed."

Poetry.

LYRICS FOR THE HEART.—"WINTER."

BY W. POOLE BALFERN.

When winter comes with mist and cloud,
However bright our hearth may burn;
We feel as though the sun was gone,
And summer days would ne'er return.

But time moves on, the winter goes,
Spring comes with birds and flowers;
We soon forget our days of gloom,
'Mid joys of brighter hours.

So when the sable cloud of fear,
Rests heavy on our hearts,
And hope wide spreads her fluttering wings,
And threatens to depart—

We think grief's winter must abide,
So slowly do we learn;
'Till Jesus shows His face again,
And bids our joy return.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF MR. JOSEPH BRISCOE, OF BANNER STREET, FINSBURY.

Who died suddenly while at Richmond, August 11th, 1868, in his 78th year.

Mysterious providence!—profoundly deep,
And yet profoundly gracious, wise and good!
Let every voice implicit silence keep,
And wait till all is better understood.

We cannot but most deeply feel the blow,
Yet, knowing 'twas our heavenly Father's hand,
'Tis ours to strive submissively to bow,
Nor question what we cannot understand.

Dare we arraign the only Just and Wise,
And ask why he denied a *dying bed*,
Where loved and loving friends might sympathise,
And treasure up each word our father said?

Nay, let us rather yield in humble faith,
And meekly bow before unerring Love,—
Believing what the Holy Scripture saith—
"What now ye know not, ye shall know above."

Yet even *now* his mercy we can trace,
Although with mournful interest we dwell
Upon the solemn mysteries of his grace,
Who has done all things,—"has done all things well."

Sudden the summons to resign his breath;
Yet, viewed aright, much mercy shines in this:
How short his passage through the vale of death!
How soon translated into endless bliss!

No lengthened painful illness was his lot,—
No gradual wasting of his mortal frame:
"He walked with God," like Enoch, "and was not:"
"God took him:" he was ready when He came.

From early life the Saviour's name he loved,
And, loving, earnestly espoused his cause;
And while his Master of his works approved,
He could afford to lose the world's applause.

In every station he was called to fill,
Not brilliantly, but *steadily* he shone;
Patient to suffer, meek to do His will,
Who now has called him home, and said—"*Well done!*"

A tender husband, and a father dear,
Now rest in "certain hope" beneath the sod,—
A faithful counsellor, a friend sincere,
A useful Christian, and a child of God.

Josiah.

Page for the Young.

THE TRUE STORY OF WILHELM.

"Thou God seest me." "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." Little children learn these words because they are simple, easily learned, easily remembered, and easily understood. Then there is the passage about the sparrows, and even city children know that familiar little bird, and love to learn that "not one of them is forgotten before God." But though children are taught these verses of the Bible chiefly on account of their child-like simplicity, there is a great truth running through them all which may be a lifelong comfort to us; —it is this, that nothing happens in the world by chance, because God himself arranges, upholds, and directs all things.

A good many years ago a little German boy, who, if he had learned the holy words I have been speaking about, had certainly not learned to love or trust in God, ran away from home. His parents lived in the beautiful city of Berlin. Little Wilhelm had mischievously destroyed some of his father's work; and as he knew that when this was discovered he would be severely punished, the foolish and cowardly little boy resolved to run away before his father returned home. He had long wished to be a sailor, and so he meant to make his way to Stettin and there persuade some captain to take him as a midshipman. Ah! if Wilhelm had remembered the little verse, "Thou God seest me," surely he would have been afraid to run away from the happy home where God had placed him. All day he hastened on, scarcely stopping to rest at all, for he was afraid of being found and taken home again. Having brought food with him, he stopped at no house by the way; but as night began to close in he remembered that he had no money at all to pay for a lodging and began anxiously to look about for some suitable place of shelter. He had come to a village, on the outskirt of which stood a pretty church; and as he passed it, in one corner he could discern through the darkness a low window, which the wind was shaking as if the fastening were loosed. "Ah," he thought, "here is a chance for me! I can easily let myself down into the church, where I shall have very comfortable quarters for the night."

No sooner had the thought come into his head than he scrambled up on the window, pushed it open, but in doing so he lost his balance and fell down into the interior. However, he was not much hurt by the fall, and as it was perfectly dark he thought the best plan was to lie down and sleep upon a wooden bench which he found himself beside. Being very wearied he slept long and soundly; but when at length he awoke great was his horror to discover that he was in a large burial vault, containing a few black coffins and the bench upon which he had slept. He sought in vain for some way of escape from this terrible prison; but the oaken door was firmly locked, and the little window through which he had fallen was far, far beyond his reach. All day long he screamed for help, and all in vain, for night came a second time to him among the tombs. Poor Wilhelm, when daylight returned, could not scream any more, for his parched throat refused to utter a sound. It seemed as if there remained nothing for him to do but to die; but God had not forgotton him, and if Wilhelm had remembered His holy presence, the gloomy vault would not have seemed so dark and cheerless. That second morning it seemed to him that he heard steps approaching, then a key turned in the lock, the door opened and a young girl entered. In a rapture of joy he sprang to meet her, but she fled in unutterable terror, closing the massy door, and leaving him again alone with the dead. It was not long, however, before the girl returned with her father, who was the

schoolmaster of the village. He brought the boy to the school-house, and there made him tell his story. "Listen boy," he then said, "you, too, had nearly been among the dead; but God has certainly work for you to do on earth. The window through which you entered is placed that no one might ever have heard your cries, for even on sabbath days none pass on that side of the building. It is some years since the vault has been entered, but this morning the thought suddenly came to me that it should be swept out. Therese being very busy to-day I hesitated to send her there; but as I could not get the impression out of my mind that it was too long neglected, I at last bade her take the brush, and make haste to return."

Wilhelm did not go to sea, but returned to his parents. The anguish of that day and night was never forgotten by him. All his life he suffered no one unrebuked to use the common expression "By chance."

"There is no such thing as chance at all," he would say, and telling this little story would add "Do you call that accident or chance? No! no! God ordered it all".—*British Messenger*

Mr. Geissler's Column.

THE WORD IS TRUE.

This is the experience of all the faithful on earth, and of the innumerable host before the throne above. Singularly it was how a certain soldier once made this experience: — the soldier's life was his greatest disgust, but he was bound to it and nothing would set him free. Once he said to himself, if the Bible is true, then there is a possibility to be saved from the soldier's life, for the same says:— "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 22). He then commenced to pray again and again, and thus to try the promise in respect to prayer. But continuing in prayer a certain voice said to him that if the Lord should hear him he would also have to amend his life, to become another man, and give up sinning, else he could not expect an answer to his prayers. He then prayed for a new heart and soon became a real Christian. As such a one he could not but bear testimony of what the Lord had done for him and to speak of Christ to all his comrades, through which soon the whole garrison was alarmed. The officers repeatedly not only scolded, but also punished him for this his "holy zeal," but because all this was without success and he answered them:—"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye," &c., he was dismissed as a soldier and driven away. Thus he found the above promise true.

Moses or the Law would have received the prodigal at his return with the rod, with imprisonment, or with bread and water. But Jesus or the Gospel received him with hearty embraces, with kisses, with a new robe and with shoes, with a golden ring and a fat meal. Behold here the difference between Judaism and Christianity, between the Law and the gospel. If sinners only knew, considered and believed how kind and graciously God would receive them!

Of the three sons of Adam was Cain—the *oldest*, very impious; of Noah's three sons was the *youngest* impious; and of Terah's three sons the *second* was impious; so we see that neither of the oldest nor the youngest, neither age nor birth, is of any avail, but the election of God according to his purpose.

Once, when a French Count was about to commence a conversation with the King Charles of England during divine service, the king said to him:—"Sir, hinder me not to listen to God whilst he is speaking to me, that he also may listen to me when I speak to him." That was a kingly behaviour which recommends itself to all.

It is to be noted that, though we find in the New Testament many in-

stances of sudden conversions, as on the Day of Pentecost, we have no cases of a sudden sanctification. Paul was suddenly converted, but about his sanctification, which followed his conversion, he writes to the Philippians: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," &c. (Phil. iii. 12—15).

Many have in their houses more looking-glasses than they are aware of. Parents, for instance, have as many looking-glasses as they have children, and many have seen already in the bad conduct of their children their own picture. A farmer once was much given to cursing; one day he was engaged with ploughing near to his house, when his oxen would not obey him satisfactorily. Whilst beating them he cursed fearfully. His little son who was with him, and just in the age for learning to speak, tried to stammer the fearful curses he just had heard. When the father remarked this, he was greatly moved. After a while he stood still, then sat down and wept bitterly. His curses caused him much pain, and he could find no rest till he had sought and found a full pardon at the feet of Jesus Christ.

If the keeper of a public-house, or a dealer in brandy, &c., will be honest he would at the opening of his business have to write on his firm the following:—"With this, my business, I shall send so and so, and many inhabitants of this town (or village) to the poor-house and constrain others to care for their families; another number I shall cause to commit various crimes, so that the tributes of the citizens will become more and their safety less; I shall send so and so, and many others to the prisons, and some even to the gallows. I shall occasion a number of diseases, and make such diseases as might have been cured incurable; a goodly number I shall bereave of their reason, and several I shall even cause a sudden death; I shall make so and so, and many wives to widows, and a lot of children to poor orphans; and not to forget, I shall continually help to hinder the preaching and the effects of the gospel, but rather ruin all the souls I can get as customers or in my shop. And this same people will ever pay me for that, and that so well that I may keep a fine house and live sumptuously every day."

A good old minister had once been slandered very much by two of his members. When he was lying on his death bed the two backbiters repented of their devilish deeds, and went to him to ask his pardon. He forgave them from all his heart, but in the same time he asked them to carry one of his pillows on the church-tower, and there to shake out all the feathers in it. However strange this seemed to them, they did the old dying man's will. When they returned to him with the empty cloth, he said he had only one other favour to ask, namely, to go and gather again all those feathers they had poured out. Astonished at him they said: "Sir, that is impossible, for they are blown into all the winds." "So you see," he said to them, "though your sin of slander may be forgiven by God and by me, those evil reports you have scattered you can never gather again, nor stop or blot out the evil consequences; therefore take heed for another time."

Faith relies on what Christ *has* done, and looks backward to Calvary. Hope relies on what Christ *will* do, and looks forward to heaven. Love, however, relies on Christ *himself*, and looks to him and his person. Is not love "the greatest of these?"

In a town in Switzerland they had in olden times the usage that the keeper of the gates of the town, a short time before he at night would close them, cried out of the gates into the fields: "Who yet will come in, let him run!" So we, and all the preachers of the gospel, cry, concerning the door of heaven which now is still open: "Who yet will come in, let him run!"

It is a great thing to have God's word and a piece of bread. There is none in the world who had all, and none who had nothing at all. Give thyself to Christ, just as thou

art, and receive him just as he is.

REPORT.

THE last summer, indeed, was an exception to the common rule; it was, at least with us on the continent, a time of great heat and dryness; the whole creation, as well as men, groaned for the refreshing rain, whilst the sun did day after day send down his burning rays. But still there was no occasion to lament against God, for we have got a harvest through all that, and even a good one, the weather also has altered already again, and even the great heat was just the fulfilment of God's promise and declared his faithfulness, for he has said:—"While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and *heat*, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Very similar to what it was in the kingdom of nature, it was in the kingdom of *grace*, for also this kingdom has its own peculiar weather and its various seasons, its bright and its cloudy days; sometimes we rejoice in feeling the soft zephyr of the Holy Spirit, and at other times we are terrified by the wild roaring of the storms of dissension, temptations and persecutions; but also this kingdom has the promise that, "while the earth remaineth, &c." If therefore, the last season was a time of heat, and what is generally connected with it, a time of dryness, it was no unheard of thing, but just according to the promise, and certainly as good and necessary as the fertile rain. Of course the Missionary, and every labourer in the Lord's vineyard, likes more a fruitful than a dry season; and the contributors to the Mission, desire more to hear reports of harvests and much success; but this would be unnatural, and though it may be expected and liked more, cannot be demanded. Faithful reports from the Mission-field will not always speak of the ingathering of souls, of bright days, of a promising spring and a plenteous autumn, but also of nights and storms, of dry summers and frosty winters, of hindrances as well as of success; and the Missionary can not only or always be engaged with harvests, but must be engaged and is mostly engaged with sowing, ploughing, planting, watching and praying. In fact the full harvest will not be left to him alone, but also become the harvest of his supporters, and will therefore not take place till at a future period, when he and they all be together in heaven.

During the last summer, the good work in Saxony has been going on; though there were not many conversions; whilst we enjoyed fair weather, pleasant days, and the soft zephyr of peace in the churches, we looked for the fertile rain from above, and prayed for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In such seasons we learn that God it is who gives the increase, and how all success depends upon the agency of the Holy Spirit. But, however dry the season was, we have had a harvest with some souls we could receive, and expect soon some more to come.

On my journeys I visited most of the Stations, and preached also in some new places. On Sunday evenings I held, whenever I could get the opportunity, open air services in the country, where we had large gatherings. When I was in Halle, I was enabled to conduct all the services of the church; besides this I was engaged with literary labours, so much so that I found in this hot summer, not yet the time for only one day of recreation.

Asking your continued prayers for my poor self and the good cause of Christ in Saxony,

I am, Yours in best respects,

MORITZ GEISSLER.

Halle, Saxony, Sep. 3rd, 1868.

BAPTISM.—Rev. Sereno D. Clark, Secretary of the Congregational Board of Publication, in the July number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, teaches that "vital union to Christ is the determinative qualification for Christian baptism;" that "Christian baptism, as the initiatory rite to the Christian Church—a church of regenerated members—demands the evidence of regeneration." Is not the exclusive baptism of believers the logical consequence from this position?

Intelligence.

YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION IN AID OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

THE Committee of the Young Men's Association in aid of the Baptist Missionary Society, invite the young men and women of the Baptist churches, seriously to consider the following statement:—

The Baptist Missionary Society was established more than 75 years ago. At that time, the British Islands and North America could alone be said to possess vital Christianity to any extent. Since then, the Gospel has been preached in most of the nations of the earth, and countries long closed against its entrance, now welcome the approach of the missionary.

More than two hundred and thirty brethren have been sent forth by the society, and devoted the energy of their days to the preaching of the cross. The success of its missions in India, China, Africa, West Indies, Brittany, and Norway, evidences that the blessing of God has rested upon the earnest and devoted labours of his servants. At the present time, some of the stations urgently call for additional helpers; and the places of others who have gone from toil to rest remain unoccupied, whilst new openings present themselves.

The importance of sending out additional labourers, has pressed very seriously upon those having the direction of the society; and to meet the desire expressed in many quarters, they have resolved, in addition to the acceptance of missionaries as heretofore, to receive proposals from young men willing to enter upon the work of evangelisation in heathen lands, receiving their support either wholly or principally from the people among whom they labour, the society rendering only such aid as it may at any time be in their power to afford. They will also gladly receive any contributions specially given for the use of such brethren, by churches or private Christians, and forward the amounts to those for whose aid they are designed.

The labours of the Young Men's Association, (formed more than twenty years since,) have been principally confined to the metropolis. The Committee, however, deem the present to be a time when its efforts should be extended to the country, and they earnestly appeal to the young men and women of the churches, on behalf of the work of the Lord in foreign lands.

MEN OF EARNEST, DEVOTED CHRISTIANITY ARE NEEDED, who for the sake of the love they bear their Lord, and from sympathy with the heathen in their ignorance and sin, will enter into the field, counting not their lives dear unto them if they may but preach the gospel of the kingdom.

MONEY IS ALSO REQUIRED. The Society needs a permanent increase of £5,000 per annum, to render its present agencies efficient. To every young and energetic disciple of the Saviour, this appeal is made for an increased liberality in their contributions. Surely, if brethren, relying upon a faithful God to provide for them, can be found who are willing to give themselves to this work, (and some have already offered,) those whom He has made the trustees of his bounty, will give with no niggardly hand towards their support.

While appealing for men and means, the Committee would ask THE EARNEST AND CONTINUED PRAYERS of every reader of this appeal. Missionary Societies were the result of prayer. Country after country has been opened to the missionary in answer to earnest supplication; the localities most blest have been those constantly remembered at the throne of grace; and surely the present is no time for restraining prayer. The whitened fields of missionary labour; the enervated condition of many brethren there; the lack of zeal at home; these and other signs call for prayer, that the will of the Lord of the Harvest may be revealed, and His promise to his Son fulfilled.

The responsibility of the work is individual, for he that gathereth not with the Lord, scattereth abroad. We therefore urge every reader of this appeal to consecrate themselves and their substance to Him who lived, loved, and died for them, for "ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

It may be necessary to state that the association does not desire by this effort to interfere with the action of any local organisation in connection with the churches; it wishes rather to increase their efficiency by interesting the young men and women more thoroughly in the work.

The money contributed will be paid into the general funds of the Baptist Missionary Society; but where, in the opinion of friends, a special object is preferred, it is only necessary in sending the money to state how it is to be appropriated.

A neat collecting book has been prepared, which will be forwarded on application to the Secretaries of the Young Men's Association, 2, John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.

On behalf of the Committee,

J. E. TRESIDDER, *Treasurer.*

W. TRESSIDER,
J. P. BACON,
W. HANNAM,
C. ROBOTTOM,
} *Hon. Secs.*

2, *John-street, Bedford row, London, September*, 1868.

[We have inserted the above address by request. In connection with it, we would call attention to the following resolutions recently adopted by the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society:—

RESOLVED.—"That the Committee will be happy to receive proposals to labour in China under the auspices of the society, (as has been done with respect to other parts of the mission field), from brethren who are disposed to enter on the service of Christ, to find, mainly or altogether, their support in the resources which the country they seek to evangelize may furnish, the Committee rendering only such aid, from time to time, as it may be in their power to afford.

"RESOLVED.—"That the Committee are prepared to receive any contributions specially given for the use of such brethren, by churches or private Christians, and to forward such sums to the brethren for whose aid they are designed."]

MINISTERIAL CHANGE.

THE Rev. James Webb, formerly of Ipswich, has removed to Bury, Lancashire, to take the pastorate of the church at Bury, (in conjunction with the Rev. Joseph Harvey) and to assist in the tutorial duties of the college.

MARRIAGES.

SINCLAIR—BATTY.—October 8th, at the Baptist Chapel, Crowle, Lincolnshire, (by special license) by the Rev. J. Stutterd, Mr. George Sinclair, of Howden Dyke, to Miss Mary Elizabeth Batty, of Crowle, and teacher of the Girls' Bible Class.

HARGREAVES — BROWN. — On the 24th of September, at the Baptist Chapel, Clough Fold, Rossendale, by the Rev. Abraham Nichols, of Sunnyside, assisted in the devotional exercises of the morning, by the Rev. James Patterson, (pastor) Dugdale, eldest son of Mr. Richard Hargreaves, of the Reedsholme, Sunnyside, Crawshawbooth, to Sarah, second daughter of Mr. Michael Brown, Holmes Cottages, Rawtenstall, Lancashire.

FENWICK—EASTWOOD.—On the 3rd October, at the Baptist Chapel, Pleasant Street, Haslingden, by the Rev. P. Prout, Mr. James Fenwick, of Carr Mill, Haslingden, to Sarah Eastwood, of Holdenwood, Haslingden.

MADEN—SPENCER.—On the 31st October, at the Baptist Chapel, Pleasant Street, Haslingden, by the Rev. P. Prout, Mr. John Maden, to Miss Ann Spencer, both of Dobbinwood, Newchurch.

RAMSBOTTOM—LUND.—On the 6th October, at the Baptist Chapel, Pleasant Street, Haslingden, by the Rev. P. Prout, Mr. James Henry Ramsbottom, of Egypt Terrace, Lower Booths, to Miss Ann Lund, of Deardengate, Haslingden.

BOOTH—PARKINSON.—On the 8th October, at the Baptist Chapel, Pleasant Street, Haslingden, by the Rev. P. Prout, Mr. Thomas Booth, of Chatterton, Tottington, Higher End,

to Miss Betty Parkinson, of Rose Bank, Tottington, Higher End.

RECEIVED FOR THE SAXON MISSION, MR. GEISSLER.

	£	s.	d.
Salendine Nook Female Missionary Society, per Mr. Ashworth	11	15	4
Perth.			
Mr. S. Greig	0	2	6
Mr. Brown	0	2	6
Misses Scott	1	0	0
Mr. J. McLaren	0	2	6
A Friend	1	0	0

RECEIVED FOR THE BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY.

By Mr. Whitehead.	£	s.	d.
George Goulé, Esq., Loughton.....S.	0	10	0
Mr. W. G. Assell, Newcastle	0	2	6
Mr. William Hilton, Manchester.....	0	2	6
Mr. Albert Broomfield, Southampton S.	0	10	0
Mr. James Taylor, Manchester.....S.	0	5	0
Rev. J. Green, Stogumber.....S.	0	5	0
Rev. Isaac Bridge & Friends, Aldbro' S.	0	10	0
Rev. William Brown, Friston .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Benjamin Newman, Tunstall ..S.	0	5	0
W. H. Westrop, Esq., Bures St. Mary S.	1	0	0
Mr. C. Hale and Friends, Clare	0	7	0
Rev. A. Spencer, Little Leigh .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Read, Brighton.....S.	0	10	0
Collection at Bishops Stratford, by the Secretary	3	6	0
H. Cooper, Esq., London .....S.	1	0	0
Rev. R. E. Sears, Laxfield.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. William Wright, Garth .....S.	0	5	0
Crewe.			
Dr. J. Lord.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Harper, ...	0	2	6
Friend.....	0	2	6
Tarporley.			
Roger Bate, Esq. .....S.	0	15	0
John Aston, Esq.....S.	0	10	0
Joseph Aston, Esq.....S.	0	5	0
Charles Bate, Esq.....S.	0	5	0
Thomas Bate, Esq. .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Thomas Walley.....S.	0	5	0
Rev. C. Bott .....S.	0	2	6
Friends	0	7	6
Wrexham.			
Mr. Simon Jones .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. E. Lloyd .....S.	0	5	0
Mrs. S. M. Jones .....S.	0	5	0
Messrs. Jonathan Owen and Son....S.	0	7	6
Rev. F. Perkins .....S.	0	2	6
Friends	0	18	6
Chester.			
Rev. Paul Price .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. J. E. Ewen.....S.	0	5	0
Llangollen.			
Dr. J. Pritchard .....S.	0	5	0
Rev. Hugh Jones .....S.	0	2	6
E. S. Jones, Esq. .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Humphrey Jones .....S.	0	5	0
Friends	0	12	6
Coventry.			
John Windsor, Esq.....S.	0	5	0
Friends	0	13	0
March.			
R. Dawbarn, Esq.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Isaac Woodward .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. P. H. Davies .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. F. Baldwin.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. J. S. Smith.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Samuel Beedzler .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Henry Green .....S.	0	5	0
Seven Friends, 2/6 each.....	0	17	6
Wisbeach.			
Messrs. Dawbarn and Sons .....S.	1	0	0
Rev. J. Cockett.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. John F. Tyers .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. F. C. Southwell.....S.	0	5	0
Several Friends.....	0	11	6
Downham.			
Mr. James Wilson.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. C. G. Casebow .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. E. Saunders .....S.	0	5	0
Friends	0	4	6
Lynn.			
Mr. C. Ibberson .....S.	0	10	0
Mr. J. R. Reach .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Joseph Kirkham .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. W. K. Martin.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. R. S. Baker .....S.	0	5	0
Mrs. William Hall .....S.	0	5	0
Seven Friends, 2/6 each.....	0	17	6
Fakenham.			
Mr. Robert Lynn .....S.	0	5	0
Several Friends.....	0	11	6
Swaffham.			
Mr. Thomas Lindsey .....S.	0	10	0
Mr. R. Vynne.....S.	0	10	0
Mr. F. Everett .....S.	0	10	0
Mr. William Gould .....S.	0	5	0
Three Friends, 2/6 each	0	7	6
East Dereham.			
Miss Warner .....S.	0	10	0
Mr. James Warner .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. J. Warren .....S.	0	5	0
Messrs. Balls and Son.....S.	0	5	0
Mrs. F. J. Smith .....S.	0	5	0
Horham.			
Rev. T. Hoddy .....S.	0	10	0
Mr. Barnes.....S.	0	5	0
Friends	0	7	6
Beccles.			
Rev. S. K. Bland .....S.	0	10	0
Mr. Nathaniel Pells.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. John Read .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. A. E. Mount .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Robert Jordan .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Jeremiah Rich .....S.	0	5	0
Several Friends.....	0	13	6
Halesworth.			
Rev. J. Gooding .....S.	0	2	6
John Bedwell, Esq.....S.	0	7	6
Mr. F. Moore.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Charles Suggate .....S.	0	5	0
Friends	0	7	6
Diss.			
William Ayton, Esq.....S.	1	1	0
Friends	0	4	9
Yarmouth.			
H. H. Gambling, Esq.....S.	0	10	0
Rev. Samuel Vincent .....S.	0	2	6
Mr. Thomas Saul .....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Thomas Sacret	0	5	0
Friends	0	5	0
Lowestoft.			
Mr. William Downing.....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Ambrose Smith.....S.	0	5	0